

Message Text

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R 161903Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2715
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 CAIRO 19131

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY BENNET, JR. FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OVIP EG
SUBJECT: SOME THOUGHTS ON CODELS AND CODEL SPOUSES

REF: STATE 200869

1. APPRECIATE INFO CONTAINED REFTTEL, WHICH PROMPTS ME
TO OFFER SOME THOUGHTS ON CODEL VISITS IN THE HOPE THAT
THEY MAY BE HELPFUL.

2. I SHARE YOUR VIEW THAT CODEL VISITS, DESPITE THE
TIME AND EFFORT THEY REQUIRE, ARE VALUABLE AND MAKE A
SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO OUR FOREIGN POLICY. THIS
HAS CERTAINLY BEEN TRUE IN THE CASE OF EGYPT. IN THE
PAST FOUR YEARS WE HAVE HAD WELL OVER 300 MEMBERS OF
THE CONGRESS VISIT SINGLY, IN SMALL GROUPS AND IN LARGER
GROUPS. FOR PAST TWO YEARS, WE HAVE HAD AS MANY AS SIX
CODELS--LARGE AND SMALL--VISIT IN A TEN-DAY TIME FRAME.
SUCH SEQUENCES OF BACK-TO-BACK CODEL VISITS POSE REAL
LOGISTIC SUPPORT PROBLEMS, WHICH ARE QUITE DIFFERENT
FROM THOSE EXPERIENCED BY POSTS WHERE CODEL VISITS ARE
OCCASIONAL AND WIDELY SPACED. NOTWITHSTANDING THESE
PROBLEMS, I BELIEVE THAT CAIRO, DESPITE ITS LIMITED
STAFF, CAN CLAIM AN ENVIABLE RECORD IN HANDLING SUCH A
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LARGE NUMBER OF GROUPS AND MAKING THEIR VISITS BOTH PRO-
DUCTIVE AND INFORMATIVE. THE PRESENCE OF SPOUSES WITH
MANY OF THE CODELS HAS BEEN AN ADDED USEFUL DIMENSION
TO SUCH VISITS.

3. I BELIEVE THAT CODEL VISITS SHOULD BE WORKED OUT IN
CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE POST AND H. WE AT THE

POST LOOK TO H OFFICERS NOT ONLY TO SERVICE THE INTERESTS OF MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, BUT EQUALLY SO AS COLLEAGUES WHO SHARE THE SAME FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES AND INTERESTS THAT WE HAVE AND ARE PREPARED TO ASSIST US WITH SUCH VISITS. AS I SEE IT, H PLANNING AND ESCORT OFFICERS CAN ASSIST THE POST IN AT LEAST THREE WAYS:

-- THEY SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE POST IS PROVIDED WITH FULL AND TIMELY ADVANCE INFORMATION AS TO CODEL PLANS, NUMBERS AND DESIRES. THIS INFORMATION SHOULD BE SENT TELEGRAPHICALLY. GIVEN THE UNCERTAIN AND POOR TELEPHONE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND CAIRO, ATTEMPTING TO MAKE SUCH ARRANGEMENTS BY PHONE IS UNWORKABLE AND WILL ONLY CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR ALL.

-- THEY SHOULD MAKE CLEAR TO PROSPECTIVE CODELS IN ADVANCE WHAT THE PHYSICAL AND GEOGRAPHIC LIMITATIONS OF A CAIRO VISIT ARE. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR ALL PARTIES THAT EXPECTATIONS BE REALISTIC. CODELS AND STAFF MEMBERS SHOULD AT THE OUTSET BE ADVISED OF TIME/DISTANCE CONSTRAINTS WHERE THESE EXIST AND AFFECT PROGRAMMING. FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS HARDLY HELPFUL TO CAIRO TO BE ADVISED THAT A CODEL PLANS TO SPEND ONE AND ONE-HALF OR TWO DAYS (INCLUDING ARRIVAL DAY) DURING WHICH TIME IT WISHES TO MEET

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WITH X NUMBER OF SENIOR GOE MINISTERS, WITH SADAT IN ALEXANDRIA OR WHEREVER HE MAY BE, VISIT SFM AND PERHAPS TAKE A TRIP TO THE OIL AREAS IN THE GULF OF SUEZ. OR, AS HAS ALSO HAPPENED TO US, TO RECEIVE A REQUEST TO PROGRAM AN AFTERNOON BOAT TRIP FROM CAIRO TO LUXOR (300 MILES AWAY). GIVEN ENOUGH TIME, WE CAN ARRANGE VIRTUALLY ANY TRIPS AND EVEN PACK THEM INTO A TIGHT SCHEDULE. BUT THERE IS A LIMIT TO WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE SHORT PERIOD OF TIME THAT MOST CODELS ALLOW. WHERE CODEL VISITATION DESIRES PATENTLY EXCEED AVAILABLE TIME, THE H PLANNERS AND ESCORT OFFICERS SHOULD MAKE THIS KNOWN SO THAT THE POST IS NOT PLACED IN THE ODIIOUS POSITION OF APPEARING TO BE NEGATIVE WHEN, IN FACT, IT IS ANXIOUS TO MAKE CODEL VISITS SUCCESSFUL. IF H ESCORT OFFICERS ARE UNCERTAIN OF TIME/DISTANCE FACTORS, NEA/EGY SHOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE NEEDED INFORMATION. IF NEA/EGY DOES NOT HAVE THE INFO, THE POST CAN OF COURSE BE QUERIED.

-- UPON ARRIVAL AT POST, H ESCORT OFFICERS SHOULD WORK IN CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH EMBASSY CONTROL OFFICERS.

SO FAR AS I AM CONCERNED, H ESCORT OFFICERS HAVE NO RPT NO AUTHORITY TO INSTRUCT CAIRO PERSONNEL. I DO INVITE THEM TO FEEL FREE AT ANY TIME TO MAKE SUGGESTIONS TO CONTROL OFFICERS AND, IF THEY DEEM IT DESIRABLE, TO BRING MATTERS THEY WOULD LIKE CHANGED TO MY ATTENTION OR THAT OF THE DCM. IN SAYING THIS, I WANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT MOST H ESCORT OFFICERS HAVE BEEN EXCELLENT AND I HAVE NOTHING BUT PROFOUND APPRECIATION AND ADMIRATION FOR THEM. OCCASIONALLY

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UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 03 CAIRO 19131

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY BENNET, JR. FROM AMBASSADOR

ONE HAS BEEN LESS SO AND HAS REGRETTABLY CREATED AN ADVERSARY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE VERY EMBASSY OFFICERS AND VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE WORKED LONG, HARD HOURS TO MAKE THE CODEL VISIT A SUCCESS. THIS KIND OF INSENSITIVITY CAN ONLY BE HARMFUL TO OUR COMMON OBJECTIVE.

4. THE IDEA OF A HANDBOOK PREPARED BY CONGRESSIONAL SPOUSES IS GOOD. ONE POINT THAT MIGHT BE INCLUDED FOR POSTS WHERE CODELS ARE AUTHORIZED EXCESS U.S. LOCAL CURRENCY FUNDS (19 FT 510) IS THAT, BY TREASURY ORDER, THESE LOCAL CURRENCIES (IN THE CASE OF EGYPT, IN EGYPTIAN POUNDS) CANNOT UPON CODEL DEPARTURES BE CONVERTED INTO DOLLARS. WE HAVE FOUND THAT THIS POINT DOES NOT SEEM TO BE WELL UNDERSTOOD BY MANY CODEL VISITORS AND IT MIGHT BE USEFULLY RESTATED TO AVOID PROBLEMS.

5. I THOROUGHLY ENDORSE THE IDEA OF INCLUDING CODEL SPOUSES IN BRIEFINGS. CAIRO HAS BEEN DOING SO FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS OR MORE. IT HAS DONE SO DESPITE THE SECURITY CLEARANCE QUESTION IN THE BELIEF THAT INTERESTED SPOUSES OF RESPONSIBLE AMERICAN LEGISLATORS DESERVE TO

BE PROVIDED AS MUCH INFORMATION AS THEIR HUSBANDS. WHERE CLASSIFIED INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED, I HAVE IDENTIFIED THIS IN MY BRIEFINGS TO CODELS. TO MY KNOWLEDGE, UNCLASSIFIED

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WE HAVE NEVER HAD A CONFIDENCE VIOLATED BY CODELS OR THEIR SPOUSES.

6. I WOULD, HOWEVER, LIKE TO SAY A WORD OF CAUTION ABOUT INDIVIDUAL SCHEDULES FOR CODEL SPOUSES. THE IDEA IS IN PRINCIPLE GOOD AND WE HAVE FREQUENTLY SET UP ON AN AD HOC BASIS A SEPARATE PROGRAM AS REQUESTED BY A CODEL SPOUSE. BUT IT SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND THAT THERE IS A LIMIT TO POST RESOURCES IN TERMS OF PERSONNEL, TRANSPORTATION, ETC., IN SEPARATELY PROGRAMMING ANY SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL CODEL SPOUSES. MOREOVER, THE CHAIRMAN OF LARGER CODELS THAT HAVE VISITED CAIRO HAS REGULARLY GIVEN STRICT INSTRUCTIONS THAT THE NUMBER OF VEHICLES TO BE RENTED FOR THE GROUP BE LIMITED TO ONE OR AT THE MOST TWO AUTOMOBILES FOR HIMSELF AND THE RANKING MINORITY MEMBER AND THAT THE REMAINDER OF THE GROUP SHOULD TRAVEL BY BUS. IS IT ENVISIONED THAT CODEL AUTHORIZATION TO RENT CARS WOULD, IF ORDERED BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXTEND TO CODEL SPOUSES ON THEIR SEPARATE SCHEDULES? OTHERWISE POST ASSETS WOULD HAVE TO BE USED FOR SUCH SEPARATE PROGRAMMING. GIVEN POST PERSONNEL AND VEHICLE LIMITATIONS, IT WOULD BE UNREASONABLE TO ASK A POST TO HANDLE MANY MORE THAN TWO OR AT THE MOST THREE SEPARATE SPOUSE SCHEDULES.

7. IT IS ALSO WORTH RECALLING THAT UNDER EXISTING FOREIGN SERVICE REGULATIONS, SPOUSES OF POST OFFICERS ARE NOT REQUIRED, UNLESS THEY WISH TO DO SO, TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH CODEL SPOUSE ESCORT ACTIVITIES. AT CAIRO A FEW DO, BUT MANY DO NOT AND THIS IS THEIR RIGHT. THE PROBLEM HAS SOMETIMES BEEN COMPOUNDED FOR US WHEN CODELS HAVE COME AT TIMES WHEN LONG SCHEDULED LOCAL CHARITY BAZAARS, IN WHICH THE EMBASSY IS EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE, ARE UNCLASSIFIED

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UNDERWAY AND INVOLVE SOME OF THE LIMITED NUMBER OF EMBASSY WIVES WHO WILL VOLUNTEER. ARRANGEMENTS COULD IN THEORY BE MADE TO ENGAGE WIVES ON A CONTRACT BASIS TO PERFORM ESCORT SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUAL CODEL SPOUSES, BUT THERE IS FRANKLY SOME DOUBT HERE RE THE PROPRIETY OF CERTIFYING SUCH A CONTRACT EXPENSE FOR WHAT ARE ESSENTIALLY PRIVATE

PURPOSES. EVEN IF IT IS DETERMINED THAT SUCH A CONTRACT IS PERMISSABLE, THE QUESTION STILL REMAINS WHETHER IT IS APPROPRIATE FOR POST TO USE OPERATIONAL FUNDS WHEN CODEL CHAIRMEN WILL NOT AUTHORIZE USE OF OFFICIAL FUNDS FOR SUCH PURPOSES.

8. FINALLY, I WANT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS TELEGRAM TO CORRECT ONE POINT THAT SEEMS SOMEHOW TO HAVE BEEN MISREPRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT. DURING THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO ALEXANDRIA, I LEARNED THAT I AM SUPPOSED TO HAVE TAKEN THE POSITION THAT WHEN ACCOMMODATIONS FOR LARGE SIZE CODELS HAVE TO BE OBTAINED AT ONE OF THE MAJOR CAIRO HOTELS, AMERICAN GUESTS SHOULD BE EVICTED OR HAVE THEIR RESERVATIONS CANCELLED. THIS IS TOTALLY INCORRECT. BECAUSE OF THE ACUTE HOTEL SHORTAGE IN CAIRO (ALL YEAR ROUND) AND IN ALEXANDRIA (DURING THE SUMMER), I HAVE USUALLY PERSONALLY HAD TO SOLICIT THE INTERCESSION OF THE VICE PRESIDENT OR THE PRESIDENCY DIRECTOR TO INSTRUCT THE HOTEL TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY NUMBER OF ROOMS. INVARIABLY THE HOTEL BALKS BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE LEGAL SUITS BY GUESTS OR THOSE WITH RESERVATIONS. ITS SOLE PROTECTION IS PRESIDENCY INSTRUCTIONS. SEVERAL OF THE MAJOR HOTELS IN CAIRO, WHEN INSTRUCTED BY THE PRESIDENCY TO PROVIDE THE LARGE NUMBER OF ROOMS THAT WE SO OFTEN NEED FOR THE BIGGER CODELS, HAVE INSISTED THAT THEY HAVE NO CHOICE IN SUCH INSTANCES BUT TO CANCEL AMERICAN

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FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY BENNET, JR. FROM AMBASSADOR

TOURISTS' OR BUSINESSMEN'S RESERVATIONS, AMONG OTHERS. WE HAVE REGULARLY URGED THE HOTEL NOT TO DO SO, BUT WITH VARYING DEGREES OF SUCCESS. THE RESULT IS OFTEN A GROUP OF IRATE AMERICAN GUESTS WHOSE RESERVATIONS HAVE UNEX-

PECTEDLY BEEN CANCELLED AND WHO HAVE AT BEST THIRD CLASS
HOTELS TO WHICH TO GO. THIS IS A PERENNIAL PROBLEM FOR
THE LOCAL HOTELS, FOR US AND FOR THE TOURISTS, BUT THERE
IS LITTLE THAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT.

9. I APOLOGIZE FOR THE LENGTH OF THIS CABLE, BUT THE
POINTS ARE IMPORTANT. I WANT TO ASSURE YOU ONCE AGAIN
THAT CAIRO WILL CONTINUE TO DO ITS UTMOST TO MAKE CODEL
VISITS THE SUCCESS THAT WE ALL WANT. EILTS

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